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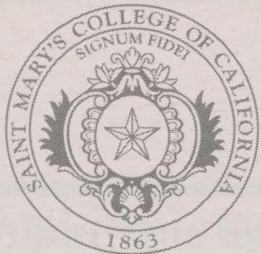
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The Collegian

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Mother Agnes advocates for peace in Syria

Speaker's controversial views on the revolution incites protesters to come to SMC

BY JAMES SCOLAMIERI
STAFF WRITER

The Saint Mary's politics department hosted a lecture event last Tuesday, April 29, titled "Peace and Reconciliation in Syria: Challenges and Prospects." The speaker, Mother Agnes-Miriam, is an advocate for reconciliation and achieving peace in a nation that has experienced the most destructive war of the 21st century. The conflict, often referred to as a civil war, is now commonly referenced as a humanitarian cri-

sis. Over 150,000 people have been killed in the conflict, more than 4 million displaced Syrians are still in the country, and countless more refugees have crossed the borders into Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Israel. This conflict has brought one of the highest costs of human life in the 21st century. After witnessing the atrocities committed by both the Assad regime and the opposition, Mother Agnes advocates healing in the wake of these terrible events which burden the Syrian people. Forgiveness, love, and rec-

onciliation are the spiritual answer to achieving peace in a destructive situation as the Syrian Civil War, according to Mother Agnes.

The regime of Bashar al-Assad, the dictator president of Syria, oversaw heinous mass murders and tortures on civilians, particularly when organizers began to protest one-party rule in 2011. The protests were an attempt at peacefully expressing the need to remove Assad from power. Of course, Assad's response was not quite as peaceful. When these protesters began

to arm themselves in response to Assad's brutality, dissent ignited into revolution. Revolutionary defectors from Assad's Army created the Free Syrian Army and soon after, revolutionary Islamic extremist groups also began to take part in the conflict.

Presently, there are over 2,000 factions involved in the war and each are occupying different parts of the country.

Mother Agnes-Miriam's position is not an easy one to accept. She see SYRIA, page 2

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Voluntourism: is it really the best way to help the needy?



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Rugby rolls into finals; will play Life University rematch

Holi has students explode into spring with bursts of colors



IN ADDITION TO A DJ, REPRESENTATIVES FROM MULTIPLE FAITHS were present to inform participants. (Andrew Nguyen/COLLEGIAN)

SMC observes its second Festival of Color to celebrate both happiness and diversity

BY CJ COSAS
NEWS EDITOR

Spring has arrived and with it comes a cacophony of colors, thanks to nature. Students and other members of the community partook in the beginning of the spring festivities on Sunday, May 4, when they threw colors at each other at to celebrate Saint Mary's second annual Holi Festival of Colors.

Although primarily hosted by the Residence Hall Association, this year the event was also co-sponsored by Campus Activities Board, Center for Engaged Religious Pluralism, and the Disney Forum.

While traditionally a Hindu festival, the Festival of Colors

has become an increasingly popular festival in other cultures, even non-religious ones. Sheila Garica, a senior, the current chair of RHA, and the organizer of the event, explained some of the meaning and purpose of the Holi festival and why Saint Mary's has taken to celebrating the event as well.

"Even though it is a Hindu festival, we thought it was an important way that a predominantly Catholic institution like Saint Mary's could learn about another religion," Garcia said. "It's a really good event to have because it's a great way to learn about different religions and different cultures that many of us don't really get the chance to."

Garcia explained that the idea for celebrating the Holi festival came partly in the wake of larger schools that had begun to partake in the festival, including Stanford University. She noted that different people and different schools have their own variations of the festival, but the idea and purpose of it are still fundamentally similar.

As one might expect at a fes-

tival using color to celebrate, there was plenty of color at the event as students rushed to grab bags full of colorful powder to throw at each other. A lot of colored powder in plastic bags and water balloons were being thrown around filling the air with a rainbow array of dust clouds.

Students also ran around as they sprayed each other with water guns. After the dust settled, students were splattered with all sorts of colors, and the

The festival is really about...encouraging acceptance of different religions.

colored bags full of powder that were their weapons littered the Chapel Lawn. Once most of the color was thrown, students continued to enjoy themselves as they danced to the music put on by the DJ, celebrating the happiness and joy the colors meant to bring.

More than just being able to throw colors at each other, how-

ever, Garcia also emphasized the other aspects of the event and the valuable experiences that the festival offered. At the event there were a couple student performances, including some who taught participants a Bollywood dance.

Also at the event were eight different booths set up, and each were dedicated to one religion and had speakers from each religion ready to talk with students and engage with any questions they might have. The eight tables included Hinduism, Wiccan/Paganism, Judaism, Islam, Sikhism, Letters to Nepal, Christianity, and Buddhism.

The idea was to give students a forum in which they could learn about these other religions in an educational but fun way. Garcia emphasized what she thought the festival really meant to Saint Mary's and why it is important to hold such an event. "It shows that we are an inclusive community that is open to all types of people and all types of cultures," Garcia said. "The festival is really about building that community and encouraging acceptance of different religions."

The ninth annual BASH celebrates gender, sexual diversities

BY LAUREN LORGE
STAFF WRITER

Saint Mary's students entered the world of the Mad Hatter and rabbit holes with the ninth annual BASH on Thursday. The BASH marked the end of the string of cultural nights that the Intercultural Center hosted this semester. With the theme of Alice in Wonderland "Through the Looking Glass," the BASH illuminated the lives of members of the LGBT community and their allies, and students were encouraged to reflect on their own experiences.

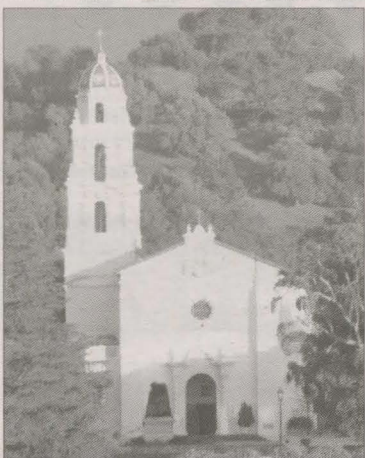
Before the performance, a gallery of student art reflected the tone of the event as attendees mingled over appetizers. The night was filled with spoken word, songs, and dance numbers. Many Saint Mary's students poured out their own experiences in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, and pansexual communities and their allies. Some performers expressed the hardships that they or others they know have faced, and others expressed the encouragement and acceptance they received from friends. Many performers wrote their own poems, rants, letters, and even raps to express their personal struggle or celebration as being a person in the LGBT community. There were also a few performances that expressed the importance of having allies.

The BASH offered audience see BASH, page 2

THE INSIDE PAGE

Inside the Bubble

News items from campus and around Lamorinda



The Collegian

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*"To act upon one's convictions while others wait,
To create a positive force in a world where cynics abound,
To provide information to people when it wasn't available before,
To offer those who want it, a choice—"*

—TED TURNER

Saint Mary's secures fair trade designation

Fair trade can signify being more than a trendy marketing device. On Thursday, Oakland-based not-for-profit Fair Trade USA awarded Saint Mary's a Fair Trade Status title. According to Fair Trade USA's campaigning website, President James Donahue, the Cabinet, at the Fair Trade Committee approved a resolution committing Saint Mary's to buying and selling merchandise whose creators are paid a fair price. Saint Mary's already sells fair trade coffee, sugar, tea, chocolate, and clothing at Café Louis, Oliver Hall, and the Bookstore.

The Saint Mary's press release lauded Sister Jodi Min for being a driving force in bringing fair trade products to campus as Saint Mary's fair trade committee chairperson.

Ghostly Gaelapalooza revival attempts thwarted

Feeling the void of Gaelapalooza, Campus Activities Board's annual spring concert and festival that was canceled after last year's outrage, townhouse residents attempted to plan an event in its place. A student organized an event on Facebook entitled "Ghostapalooza" with the idea that some sort of similar festivity

would take place in the courtyard area of the lower townhouses. However, Public Safety prevented any sort of public gathering from taking place in this area on Saturday afternoon. Public Safety confirmed to The Collegian in a phone call that Public Safety became aware of Ghostapalooza through Facebook and that the security force specifically patrolled the lower townhouse area to prevent any such event from happening.

Relay for Life sets the tone against cancer

As part of the American Cancer Society Colleges Against Cancer

movement, the Relay for Life student organization took place on Saturday for 24 hours on Chapel Lawn. Teams from other organizations and departments joined the cancer-fighting cause with tents raised on the perimeter of the lawn. According to the event's Facebook page, Relay for Life describes itself as a community fundraising walk in which participants walk for 24 hours, along with food, games, and fun activities sprinkled throughout the day as part of a larger community fundraising effort. Proceeds are then donated to cancer research through the American Cancer Society.

SYRIA: protestors emphasize necessity to overthrow old regime

continued from page 1

advocates a spiritual approach to the situation in Syria as opposed to a political one. Peace and reconciliation are not political aims but spiritual and humanitarian ones. These goals, which prioritize peace through reconciliation, could be understood to compromise the revolution and the attempt to overthrow the regime. Spiritual healing does not motivate people to win wars. Some proponents of the revolution at this event chose to voice this view.

In the question and answer period at the end of the event, many of these opposition proponents attempted to speak out of turn. When they began to speak up, the event staff made immediate efforts to quiet them. But the energy of the opposition would not be contained so easily. After the event, many of those upset by Mother Agnes's position voiced their concerns in the Le Fevre Theater lobby afterward.

Qusai Zakarya, one of the attendees who wanted to confront Mother Agnes after the event, spoke to The Collegian. Zakarya is a chemical weapon attack survivor and Syrian rebel media activist and organizer. He explained why he wanted to speak at the event. "She is acting as a regime propaganda organizer," Zakarya said. He claimed that Mother Agnes's position is aimed at ending

the Syrian revolution, giving in to regime oppression and letting the resistance die. Zakarya also believes that regime change without violent confrontation is not possible. He has personally suffered beatings, imprisonment, rockets firing sarin gas, and a host of other crimes at the hands of the Assad regime. Now, he invests his time as an advocate for the rebels, fighting to overthrow the regime, and is now on a speaking tour of the U.S. to rally support. For a man like Zakarya, who has spent his life in the battle to liberate his nation, a call to end violence cannot be so easily digested.

During the event, Dr. Hisham Ahmed, a Saint Mary's politics professor and moderator of Mother Agnes's talk, claimed that the choice to move from non-violent protest to armed conflict strengthened the regime, and if the transition had not occurred, the regime would have fallen two years ago. Assad can win a war much more easily than he could prevent a non-violent socio-political movement. Dr. Ahmed also claimed the strong response by event staff to those who wished to speak out of turn was a response to Zakarya and other like-minded individuals, who desired to harass a guest of the college and use the event as their own public platform.

Mother Agnes is trying to make a difference with spirituality, while Zakarya was trying to make one



SOME ATTENDEES specifically attended Mother Agnes' talk with the intent of disruption. (Andrew Nguyen/COLLEGIAN)

through politics and war. Each view the issue from a different context, showing the complexity of the Syrian situation. If one cannot ethically

weigh political goods and spiritual goods against one another, how can one know whether it is right to fight and die, or reconcile and die?

BASH

continued from page 1

members both an entertaining show and an important message. When asked why she attended, Cheyenne Jones stated, "I have friends performing, and I know how much work they put into it, and I want to see it in action. I also support what BASH stands for." Holland Enke saw both the fun and importance of the event. She mentioned she attended the event because she is "proud to be an ally" and wants to show her support in any way that she can.

Tai Tuasosopo, who participated in two of the performances, was motivated to be a part of the show because she was impressed with last year's BASH performance. Tuasosopo said, "I wanted to be a part of BASH because I had watched it in the past and really loved the show, the people, and the energy they brought to the cultural night."

Participants and audience

members alike saw the importance of the BASH as a way to show how someone can be an ally for the LGBT community. Tuasosopo mentioned that she participated in the BASH because, "It's necessary for people to know the importance of being an ally, not just to the LGBTQIA but to other groups as well."

Many of these performances were heartfelt and moving. One of the more light-hearted highlights of the evening was the Cinderella skit.

Cheyenne Jones commented that she really enjoyed that particular performance saying, "I loved the Cinderella performance because it was very entertaining and got the whole crowd laughing." Enke, when asked what her favorite part of the night was, said, "Honestly I was just so inspired by how full of life the whole event was. There was so much passion and support — that was my favorite part."

The BASH showed how important standing up against



PERFORMERS represented a diversity of voices and backgrounds. (Ardi Samonte/COLLEGIAN)

discrimination and creating a community of acceptance and understanding toward the LGBT community is to Saint Mary's. Along with this, it is also important to celebrate the progress

that has been made and the support individuals have received from friends and family. The BASH is a great forum for having open conversation about and celebration of LGBT culture.

NEWS

Snapshots



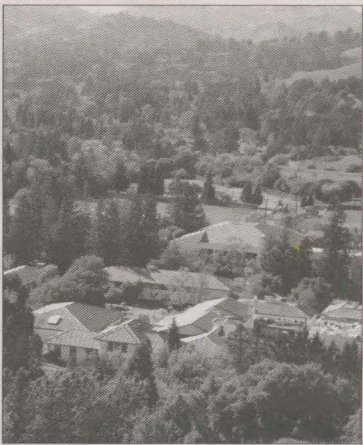
BROTHER ARMIN A. LUISTRO FSC stands with AS President Leslie Anne Salvador at Convocation last Wednesday. (Andrew Nguyen/COLLEGIAN)



PRESIDENT JAMES DONAHUE and Bishop John Cummins at Convocation last Wednesday. (Andrew Nguyen/COLLEGIAN)

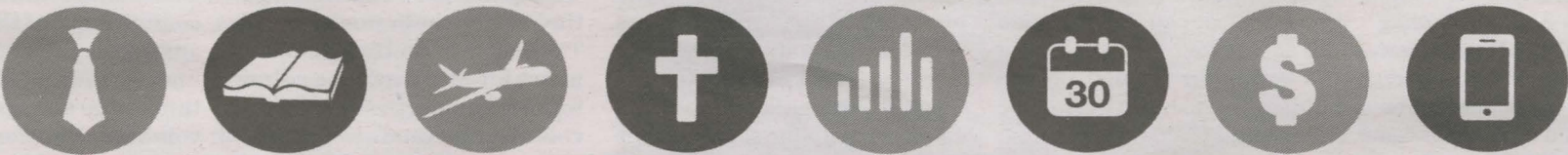


STUDENTS throwing colored powder at each other during the Holi Festival of Colors (Andrew Nguyen/COLLEGIAN).



Campus Calendar

- CCIE Open House**
Wednesday, May 7
12:00-1:30 p.m.
Soda Center
Contact Donna Ubela
x8283
- Creative Writing Reading Series with Rosemary Graham & Erin McCabe**
Wednesday, May 7
7:30-9:30 p.m.
Soda Center
Contact Sara Mumolo
sm13@stmarys-ca.edu
- SMC Dance Company in Convergence**
Thursday (May 8), Friday (May 9)
Saturday (May 10)
8:00 p.m. - N/A
LeFevre Theatre
Contact Performing Arts Department
x4670



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OPINION

Cinco de Mayo means more than margaritas

BY MATT RINGARD
OPINION EDITOR

Yesterday was Cinco de Mayo, the popular holiday widely associated with margaritas, beers, plenty of Mexican food, and a profusion of weekend sales. Across the United States, restaurants and bars, braving the lime shortage crisis, offered special deals and events. Department stores advertised great price cuts, and newspapers featured articles with headlines like, "How to Throw the Ultimate Cinco de Mayo Festival." Students at colleges enjoyed Mexican-themed parties (not all did — students of UC Davis attempted to throw a "Cinco de Drinko" party that was swiftly canceled). It also wouldn't have been complete without some pro-American rallies thrown by the Tea Party, which occurred as nearby as Morgan Hill.

Despite its popularity, I notice that few seem to know what exactly they're celebrating when May 5 rolls around. If you look up Cinco de Mayo on Wikipedia, you will see that the first line of the entry, in italics, gently tells readers: "Not to be confused with Mexican Independence Day, which occurs on September 16." At the end of the entry's first paragraph, it reminds us of this: "Cinco de Mayo is not Mexico's Independence Day — the most important national patriotic holiday in Mexico — which is celebrated on September 16." This is hilarious, sad, and revealing.

Like many holidays, my suspicion is that few know (or perhaps even care) about the significance of May 5. So first, here's a brief history lesson.

At its most basic, Cinco de Mayo celebrates the Mexican victory against French forces at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862. Following the 1858-1860 Reform War, the new Mexican president, Benito Juárez, was forced to place a moratorium on paying interest on debts to foreign nations. France was among these nations and, along with Spain and England, invaded Mexico to collect payment. The French and Mexican forces collided in Puebla, and though the Mexican army was battered and outnumbered, Puebla was well fortified, and the French were driven out.

The Mexican victory was a remarkable event, both for the fledgling nation itself and the European nations that dominated much of the world. It was enormously inspiring for the country; it was a show of self-determination that charged the morale. It was David and Goliath.

Though it remains a date recognized and celebrated in Mexico, it is not a federal holiday there, and the alcohol-heavy celebration seen in the United States is largely unique to it. This is typical here. A cultural event is adopted (appropriated, perhaps) and degenerates into a commercialized day of drinking, shopping, or other consumption — think of Valentine's Day, Saint Patrick's Day, and even Labor Day.

I don't mean to say that we shouldn't celebrate these holidays; I'm all for embracing cultures and recognizing their traditions and heritage. But much of that is lost on holidays like Cinco de Mayo. Enjoy a margarita if that's your thing, but more importantly, learn what the day means for its culture. That's the whole idea of a holiday.

Voluntourism: imperfect system with potential

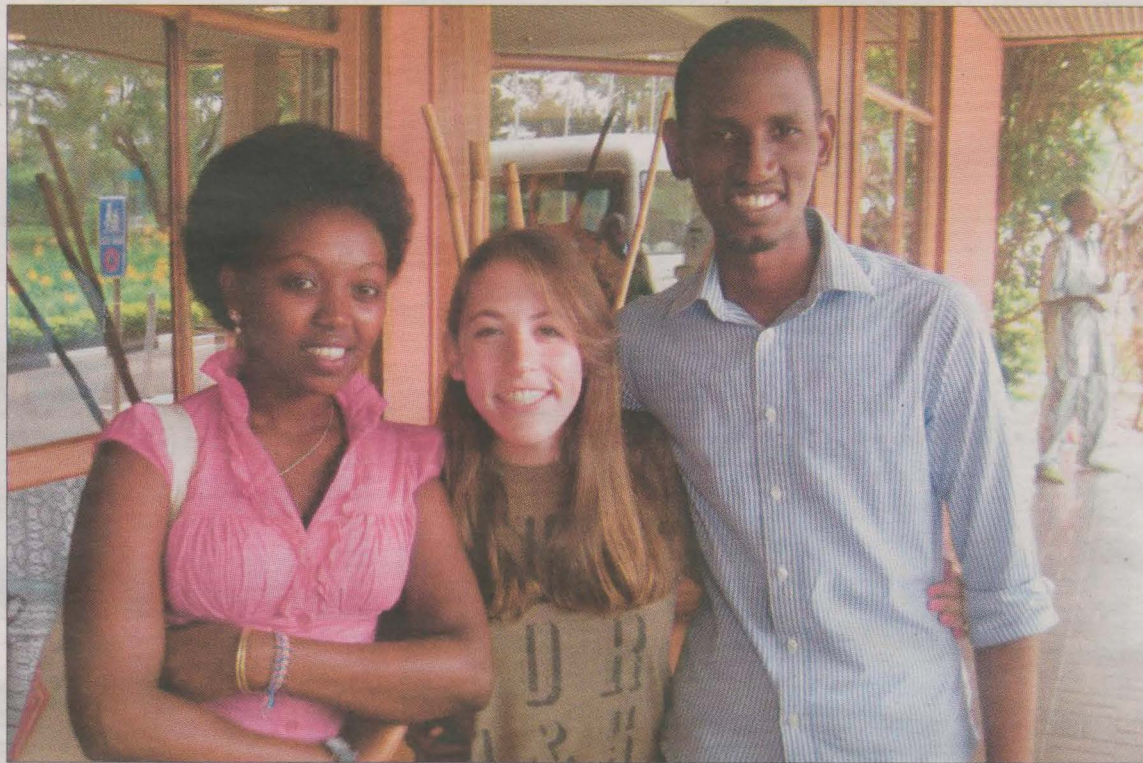
Voluntourism gets people out there; now we need to direct their efforts in a positive way

BY LAUREN LORGE
STAFF WRITER

There is a new trend emerging with vacationing called voluntourism, where individuals pay to travel to another country, not just to relax and enjoy the environment, but to also volunteer. The idea is that people can enjoy a new location in a vacation capacity while still doing something good. The volunteering is as varied as helping out in an orphanage, the construction of homes, or providing medical vaccines for infants in third world countries. This idea has taken flight among the privileged who are able to afford a month's vacation and has become so popular that there are websites that offer trips to South America, Asia, and Africa and organize a whole itinerary that combines comfort and site seeing in tandem with volunteering and philanthropy.

People opposed to voluntourism argue that, usually, the work that is done is not helpful. More often than not, the privileged volunteers lack skills and experience whether it is in construction, teaching English, or whatever their volunteering entails. Because of this, many argue that the money spent on the trip could be better spent on a donation to a reputable charity.

It is hard to fault people whose intentions are to do good. However, serious issues are raised when people lack experience in what they are volunteering for. Instead of a foreigner coming in for a month to build half of a home, local people who need jobs could be employed. Instead of a volunteer trying to teach children English and having the children distracted by the novelty of having an American in the classroom, more time could be spent developing English programs local teachers can use.



LAUREN LORGE in her social justice trip to Rwanda for January Term 2013. (Courtesy of Lauren Lorge)

But these problems not only apply to voluntourism, but also to charities, development aid, and volunteering in general.

Issues of where money is going, whether the needs of the community are actually being met, and whether the process is effective overshadow every social justice and charity organization.

It can be argued that some of the courses in the Saint Mary's January Term travel program fall under the category of voluntourism. With the Jan Term program, students have the opportunity to participate in a social justice course in a foreign country. Most of the professors who take students on the travel courses have gone several times

before and have established relationships with people in the country. Because of this, professors are able to return and complete projects from previous years, even with a new group of students. Furthermore, professors are able to work with the partners from the country and listen to the specific needs of the people. I had the fortune of traveling to Rwanda in January 2013 as part of a social justice course. One of the large aspects of the course was learning about development aid and understanding what makes aid effective or ineffective. We had discussions about the organizations we worked with and what we saw in these organizations that made them positive aid. These Jan Term travel courses may hint at a way that voluntourism can work as an effective volunteer method.

It is unwise to discourage people who are willing to make a conscious effort to help improve the lives of others. Half the battle of volunteering is getting people to care enough to participate. Rather than bashing these "privileged" people who travel to other countries in the name of service, we should look at ways to make voluntourism more efficient and beneficial for everyone. The good intention behind voluntourism can be taken and guided in the right direction. Things such as listening to the voices and needs of the community in which the volunteers will be serving, setting realistic and obtainable goals for the skill level and time commitment of the volunteers, and making sincere attempts to understand and take in the culture can go a long way in making voluntourism more impactful.

Skipping classes is more habit than convenience

Students abuse privilege to skip classes, motivation is needed to keep ourselves going

BY CALLIE COKER
STAFF WRITER

Have you heard of the college triangle? You know, the triangle consisting of academics, sleep, and a social life. Each student faces this triangle during his or her first semester at college and can only choose two items. Time is a luxury when it comes to college, and most of the time, college students feel completely stressed about getting everything on their to-do list accomplished. At Saint Mary's College, there seems to be a culture that implies that students typically pick sleep and a social life with a little academia on the side. By this, I mean there seems to be a culture of skipping classes.

Depending on the professor or department, each student gets two to three classes a semester that they are allowed to miss with no questions asked. Whether they miss for illness, family emergencies, or because they don't want to go, they are guaranteed the absences. These absences are used by students,

and students oftentimes use all of them. The fact that professors offer free misses to students does mean, however, that not going to class has become a bit of an issue for many students. There are varying reasons that people skip class, but regardless, skipping can be touchy.

Everyone has their own way of motivating themselves, but motivation needs to take place because skipping class is a culture that shouldn't exist.

Once students begin skipping classes, it becomes a habit they cannot shake. Once the first skip is complete, students find it easier and easier to skip other classes continually until pretty soon, it's the end of the semester and skipping is a part of them. Say you skip class twice

and then you catch a terrible flu that puts you out for an entire week; now you're two absences over your limit and your grade is lowered.

Now, I understand that there are moments when going to class seems like a completely inefficient use of time given how much homework you have or because of a job you hold. I have many a time complained that I don't have time to go to class because I have papers to write, books to read, and tests to study for, but then I remember that if I don't go to class, I might miss something important, like a quiz or an announcement about deadlines.

Skipping class is easy for many people, but it's a hard habit to break once it manifests itself into your being. There are several ways to motivate yourself to attend class even when it's really hard. My roommate motivates herself to go to class by calculating how much the class is costing her. I remind myself that it's only an hour or an hour and a half, and force myself to consider that I will

get more out of the class if I get to discuss the material with my peers.

Everyone has their own way of motivating themselves, but motivation needs to take place because skipping class is a culture that shouldn't exist. As nice as it is to be on your own in college, you shouldn't make skipping class a common occurrence because you're paying a nice chunk of money to go to this college, and not attending class is burning precious dollars every single time.

I'm not saying that you shouldn't miss a single class in the entirety of your four years, but I'm saying you should use your absences wisely. Skipping culture is something that penetrates many campuses nationwide, but something about Saint Mary's is that our classes are small. Our professors know our faces and they notice when we aren't present. It's one thing to miss class if you're one person out of a five hundred-person lecture; it's another if you're one person in an eighteen-person seminar.

OPINION

Women, the time to lean in and take lead is now

Arianna Huffington's argument for relaxing over leaning in not applicable for all

BY SARA DESANTIS
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

As a young woman approaching the end of my time in school only to break out into the big world of work, there is a plethora of books and articles available to me about how to survive in the corporate and domestic worlds. Some say I can't have it all, and some say I *can* have it all, but by asserting myself, I risk the chance of being labeled "bossy" (at best) Should I have children? And if I do, do I move to the suburbs and trade my career for separating whites and darks for the wash and ferrying offspring to soccer, piano, and tutoring? Should I be a part time mom and flex time worker? Do I lean in or lean out (or do I dance the hokey pokey and shake it all about)?

Arianna Huffington – the chair, president, and editor-in-chief of her popular news and blog site the Huffington Post – decided to enter the fray herself, releasing her own book directed toward women entitled "Thrive: The Third Metric to Redefining Success and Creating a Life of Well-Being, Wisdom, and Wonder" on March 25. Essentially,

"Thrive" can be seen as a response to Facebook Chief Operating Officer Cheryl Sandberg's own female-directed self-help book "Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead." Sandberg's book inspires women to pursue their goals and challenges the idea that men own the workplace domain, instead encouraging men to support women in the workplace and to create an equal partnership in both work and domestic spheres of life.

By contrast, Huffington's book tells female readers that "leaning in" is a mistake; women should be "relaxing out" and taking care of their emotional and physical well-being. To illustrate this, her book includes inspirational stories involving Wall Street women who fought and networked their way to the top, only to realize they were unhappy. One particular story features a CEO who was inspired to move to Cape Cod to live among a more natural environment instead of the concrete jungle of Wall Street. Promoting her book on "The Ellen DeGeneres Show," Huffington encouraged women to keep their cell phones away from their bed to encourage more restful sleep and said that every person

should meditate for at least five minutes every day.

Now, I like taking naps as much as the next over-worked college student, but Huffington's argument for females in the workforce has some faults. Obviously, the most glaring incongruity in her argument for women to back away from aggressively working to succeed is that most of us cannot afford to jet off to Cape Cod and spend time reconnecting with nature and doing deep-breathing exercises. To thrive, you have to strive first. Huffington – and even Sandberg – are both women who have reached the top and are pretty financially secure (Huffington sold the Huffington Post to AOL in 2011 for \$315 million, which can buy her all the meditation time she needs), thus allowing them the luxury to publish their advice for other women who are still fighting the ever-present glass ceiling and working their way up the job ladder.

Huffington does impart a practical and refreshing reminder amidst all the clamor for women to assert themselves in the workforce: you can succeed in whatever you want to do, but you also need

to get some sleep. You're right, Arianna, it's important to step back and have a glass of wine and watch Netflix sometimes. However, this is still the time to lean in. Sandberg's work makes the important point that there are many obstacles that women must face to succeed in any industry they choose. Getting an extra 30 minutes of sleep may not change that.

Whether you agree with Huffington, Sandberg, or can find a favorable balance between both, it's important to take comfort in the fact that these conversations concerning gender inequality have now become the mainstream. More and more female celebrities and executives are publishing books or articles, online and in print, to encourage women, in fact, all people, to reexamine issues in society relating to gender. So, yes, the amount of material advocating for how women should take control of their lives can be overwhelming or even contradictory, but it's also raising awareness and educating women on how to make choices that satisfy themselves first and foremost. And that's something to lean toward.

Cards are a problematic convenience

BY TORI STRINGER
ASSISTANT OPINION EDITOR

Mother's Day is just around the corner and that means buying cards for the mothers, grandmothers, aunts, and friends in your life who have experienced the miracle of childbirth. Sending a card can be a sweet way to show someone you care, but the greeting card industry these days doesn't make this seemingly simple task easy. I know that saying holidays are just moneymakers for the greeting card industry is cliché, but it is so true. And here's why.

Reason 1: The greeting card section in any store is both incredibly over- and under-whelming. You walk into Target, turn toward the cards section and are instantly bombarded with multiple walls of hundreds of cards to choose from. How are you even supposed to choose one when you can't even see all of them?

Reason 2: Greeting cards all say horribly stupid things. You know what I mean. There are either the boring ones that say simply "Happy (insert name of holiday here)!" or the ones that have a badly-written essay in them. Some of the Mother's Day ones are the worst (e.g., "On this day of celebrating wonderful women, you deserve to be praised. From all the times you changed my diapers, wiped my tears, or put a band-aid on my scraped knee to the times when...blah, blah, blah, you get the idea"). Then you literally have to spend hours in the store reading all of the cards to try to find the perfect balance between simplicity and gushy mushy garbage. (Spoiler: there is no happy medium.)

Reason 3: Cards are so expensive. Seriously. Cards average about \$3-5 each nowadays, so you'd better hope you don't have a huge family. Either that or you'd better hope they don't like cards. As college students especially, buying two or three greeting cards could be an entire meal for us. Food or cards? Hmmm, hard choice (not really).

There are alternatives nowadays to physical cards, though. E-cards are fairly popular and most everyone has an email address. However, this can feel a little impersonal compared to something you physically have to write in and lick to seal. You could hand-make your greeting cards – that is if you have the time to. They say there's nothing better than a homemade gift, but unfortunately homemade cards don't come with their own conveniently sized envelopes.

In the end, there's really no getting around feeding into the greeting card industry, as much as we may want to. I will continue to buy cards that I don't think say exactly the right thing and are way too expensive. Greeting cards are somehow worth that smile we know will arise on the recipient's face before they eventually throw it away. We send cards so that we, in turn, will receive them on respective holidays that apply to us, in hopes of feeling that short-lived happiness as well. And when we are far away from our loved ones, sometimes cards are the best way to show we are thinking about someone (and avoid an hour-long phone call).

Rise of the single means the death of the album

Releasing singles brings value to only one song instead of the art of crafting a complete album

BY JAMES SCOLAMIERI
STAFF WRITER

Over the past couple of decades, a new form of releasing popular music for sale has propelled itself to the top of the charts. It is, of course, the single. In the early years of selling recorded music, albums were the ideal method of compiling recorded music for listening and people bought vinyl records as their primary means of listening. 45s (the old-school single), as I know them, could be purchased but were more often used by radio DJs. If you haven't noticed, this has changed; digital recordings have taken over. Judging from my experience operating turntables and other now-ancient record players, the medium for transmitting the recording makes a significant difference to the listener's experience. The medium, or means of replaying the recording, defines the choices a listener can make about whatever he or she wants to hear. This is because the limitations of a recording's format impose a superstructure of intended listening. Both artistic and marketing interests can, if they are smart enough, utilize this superstructure to achieve a desired effect.

Let me explain what I mean by a superstructure: the concept of a piece of music, from the perspective of a music listener, of any genre contains a certain expectation of a specific structure. In today's popular music, this structure is that of a song. Many songs have a rhythmic component, a melody, words, tonality, etc., and these are all things we look for in them. The structure of a piece of audible art like music can change, but oftentimes the structures of a piece of music are grouped within genres. Certain styles of electronic music, for example, have recognizable structures.

The phonograph player or turntable had a relatively impactful superstructure for intended listening. The record disks are meant to be played from the beginning to end with only one flip in between. Playing individual songs on a record, especially in the middle of the album, takes more effort and results in less desired music for your efforts, in other words, to play a song you go through unpacking the vinyl, putting it on the turntable, and setting the needle. This means that there is a kind of superstructure, an order to the songs which the artist can assume the listener will adhere to when listening. The vinyl album forces the listener to think of an artist's work as grouped into complete albums. So when the vinyl album was the main medium for listening to music, the artists could order the songs they created to achieve an effect which did more than each song could have individually. Artists wrote albums, not just songs. They were, in a way, forced to create something which could be listened to the whole way through.

Now things have changed; the single has overtaken the album in annual music sales. I attribute this to the important shifts in the way music is stored and accessed. It is more practical to purchase a single as an mp3 file than as a physical copy. We can store music for listening as mp3 files and stream music from the internet. We can change songs at the click of a button, and find and listen to virtually any song we want quickly and easily. Music in its most basic structure, the song, is far more accessible than it was when recordings were stored on vinyl records. We can pick any song on an album and listen to it, and then pick another a moment later. That means that the sale value of an album full of great songs is not that much more than an album with two

great songs and a bunch of mediocre ones. People aren't forced to listen to entire sides of albums anymore, so they will still buy an album even if there are only a few tracks they

know they like. The music industry's marketing strategies utilize the single to make more money from less music. Not exactly honest, but hey, it's show business.



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CULTURE

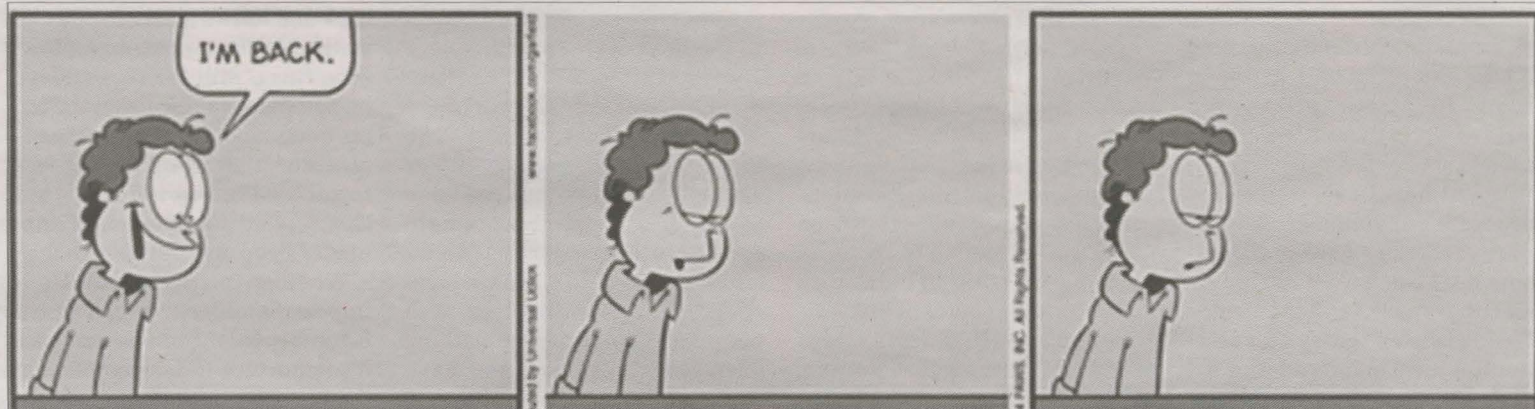
The most interesting blogs available on Tumblr

Lonely Cheetos and Out of Context Science provide entertainment and procrastination sites

BY SARA DESANTIS
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Finals season is looming on the horizon, so now is the time to prepare a list of sites to help you put off that 10-page research paper and final. Tumblr, the popular blogging site populated by Trekkies, hipsters, future lonely crazy cat ladies, and the occasional errant 13-year-old One Direction fan, hosts a veritable treasure trove of blogs with which one can waste away an entire Saturday. From the offensive to the hilarious, there is something on this site for everyone – and, no, you don't have to create a Tumblr of your own to enjoy these popular blogs. That would be work, and that is what we are avoiding here.

For the history major, or anyone with a healthy appreciation for attractive people, check out Hotties from History (hottiesfromhistory.tumblr.com), which lives up to its title in being a blog solely dedicated to sharing pictures and facts about hot historical men and women. So far, the blog features well-known historical celebrities such as Zelda Fitzgerald,



www.garfieldminusgarfield.net

Joan of Arc, and Frederick Douglass. It's lacking in some other notable historical hotties (Ernest Hemingway—just going to put it out there), but the blog combines actual academic facts and attractive people, which is always a success.

Garfield Minus Garfield (garfieldminusgarfield.net) is a personal favorite. This blog takes the popular "Garfield" comics (the one with the large, orange talking cat) and removes Garfield in order to, as the site states, "reveal the existential angst of a certain young Mr. Jon Arbuckle," who is Garfield's owner. This actually works really well and is funny in a deeply

depressing way.

On the less depressing side, Awkward Stock Photos (awkwardstockphotos.com) is an extensive compilation of those stock photos you stumble across while late-night Google searching clip art for that PowerPoint presentation you procrastinated on. This blog is great because it is filled with photos for just about every conceivable notion you have; and it's therefore somewhat inspiring that some poor sap with a camera is out there ensuring that your wish to see a man talking on the phone while wearing a lampshade as a hat has been satisfied. Want to see a man wearing his own face

as slippers? That's there. How about cows on pogo sticks? Yes, it exists.

If you're looking for something more serious (except not really), then mosey on over to Out of Context Science (outofcontextscience.com). Science is great for a lot of things, especially for generating thousands of facts that you can throw out at a dinner party to convince the attractive person in the room that you went to Cal Tech. However, when taken out of context, scientific facts veer more on the side of disturbing than impressive. Take, for example, this one: "certain members operated in up to 14 different subgroups,

some of which had the specific task of committing murders." This one is more philosophical: "So the cats are really just a drop in the ocean."

Finally, there is the downright weird and super depressing Lonely Cheetos (lonelycheetos.tumblr.com). This blog is devoted to showing nothing else but pictures of lost, lonely Cheetos that anyone can submit. There are a fair amount of snaps of lonely Cheetos in sidewalk cracks, in addition to an unfortunate number of crushed Cheetos on the sidewalk. But let's be real here—everyone feels like a crushed Cheeto during the final push to summer break.

Jack's Restaurant and Bar impresses



THE MONTEREY OMELET at Jack's Restaurant and Bar is a colorful and hearty choice, in addition to other items on the restaurant's extensive breakfast, lunch, and dinner menus. (Evelyn Minaise/COLLEGIAN)

The Pleasant Hill eatery serves up delicious cuisine for all occasions at all times

BY EVELYN MINAISE
ASSISTANT CULTURE EDITOR

Looking for a restaurant that will be your go-to no matter the occasion? Jack's Restaurant and Bar is the place to go. A friendly place, this restaurant provides a comfortable atmosphere for any group of people.

Walking in, you'll notice all sorts of groups: adults, fam-

ilies, and young adult friend groups. Photos of families and kids pinned to the board by the entrance reveal why it's a home to all. With only two locations, Pleasant Hill and San Bruno, it is obvious that this local restaurant has thrived because of loyal customers that love the food and service.

Similar to a Chili's restaurant, Jack's is a casual restaurant with simple style: not quite high-end and not quite low end. The Pleasant Hill location has ample seating indoors and a comfortable outdoor area as well. Inside, there is a bar and a large flat-screen TV, a perfect area to grab a meal as you watch a sports game.

What's great about Jack's, though, is that they have full menus for breakfast, lunch, or

dinner. All three meals have plenty of options, and breakfast is even served until 2 p.m. I ordered a Monterey omelet and was happy with what I got. The plate looked colorful and hearty, and the meal was delicious and filling. It was exactly what I was craving, and it definitely hit the spot. Everyone else at my table was satisfied with their orders, as well, whether they ordered breakfast or lunch foods. We wanted to order a dessert just to try it out but were too full!

By the time I left, I vowed I would return. I went with friends, but it seemed like an ideal place for my family, as well. I can't wait to come back to Jack's and try something else off the menu. With a place this comforting, I'm sure I'll be back.

It's easy with Keezy

Recording app mixes voices and sounds

BY GRANT SELLAND
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Much of today's popular music consists of samples and repeating musical beats and melodies. Combine that with the increasing prominence of intuitive musical technology, and you've got Keezy.

Keezy is the modern musician's best friend. Have an idea for a beat and a melody but not sure how they'd sound together? Record any sound you want onto any of the eight different, colorful sample buttons on Keezy's interface just by humming into your iPhone.

While holding down the button, watch your compositions come to life. Record beatboxing, vocal harmonies, keyboard, guitar, drums, or ambient sounds onto your sampleboard and play those sample buttons in any order that you please (or all simultaneously for a disorienting treat) and experiment with the sounds you've created.

It doesn't just have to be limited to music, though. Record spoken sentences or just words into your sampleboard.

With this app, why would you speak to your friends directly when you can just push a button on your phone to create your own custom automated response?

Tell a story in bits and pieces with your Keezy sample buttons. For instance, speak out passages on each button and tell your friends they can only hear the next part of the Keezy-story as the new Game of Thrones

episodes come out.

If you're familiar with genius musician Reggie Watts, you'll be pleased to know he is an active contributor to this app. For those of you who do not know, Watts is known to improvisationally loop his voice during his performances, usually starting with a beat, adding a vocal bass line, then possibly some other vocal melodies.

He lets these sounds loop while he makes up nonsense lyrics to sing over them. Inevitably, hilarity ensues. Now with Keezy, you can be just like Reggie.

But maybe you're thinking, "No, I'll never live up to the wonder of an anomaly that is Reggie Watts." Not to worry.

Record any sound you want... just by humming into your phone.

There are preset sampleboards on the app provided by artists including some beats and storytelling by Reggie and sounds by Tegan and Sara, Francis and the Lights, and Reni Lane to name a few. So if you do not feel like your personal samples live up to victorious standards, you are free to manipulate these artists' samples in any order or beat you feel. Play one sound over and over again. Or play two. Play all eight of them at once. Do whatever feels good. As Reggie Watts himself asserts, "It's easy with Keezy."

GRADE: A

SPORTS

NBA playoffs heating up moving into second round

BY PHILLIP VISICO
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Sixteen teams get a bid into the playoffs, but only one team comes out on top with the title: the NBA playoffs have arrived. These NBA playoff games have been nothing short of exciting, from being skunked in the first round to buzzer beater shots clinching a series win. Only three series weren't dependent on a game seven.

In the East bracket, the Miami Heat swept the Charlotte Bobcats in four games. All eyes were on LeBron James, as he holds an impressive 16-2 first round record in his career as a player for the Heat. James said, "The best thing about this series was that we improved every night. We got better and closed them out which will help us for the next series." The Heat's momentum could continue in the second round, as they will face either the Toronto Raptors or Brooklyn Nets.

It is weird to see a team gain home court advantage during playoffs and not capitalize; the Bulls in the last three years have lost the series with home court advantage. The Washington Wizards took the series from the Chicago Bulls in five games; the key contributors of the series for the Wizards were Bradley Beal and John Wall. Beal lead the Wizards in the series with 99 points while Wall put up 94 within the five games. The Wizards next contender will be the Indiana Pacers.

The Indiana Pacers beat the Atlanta Hawks in game seven with a score of 92-80. They will play the

Wizards for the second round of playoffs.

The Pacers took the series in seven games. The impact players of the series for the Pacers were Paul George, who dropped 137 points, and his teammate David West, who contributed 90 points. The leaders for the Hawks in the series were Paul Millsap and Jeff Teague. Millsap scored 121 points and Teague put up 119 points.

The final series for the East is a matchup between the Brooklyn Nets and Toronto Raptors. The series is tied 3-3 and will be determined by a game seven.

The Nets and Raptors have played against each other ten times this year and are pretty much neck in neck when it comes to total points scored against each other. The Raptors' total is 767, and the Nets' is 766. Eight of the 10 games have come down to a difference of five points within the last five minutes.

Game seven followed suit for each these teams as the Brooklyn Nets beat the Toronto Raptors 104-103. The game went down to the final seconds as the veteran, Paul Pierce, came up with a huge block against Kyle Lowry to seal the victory for the Nets.

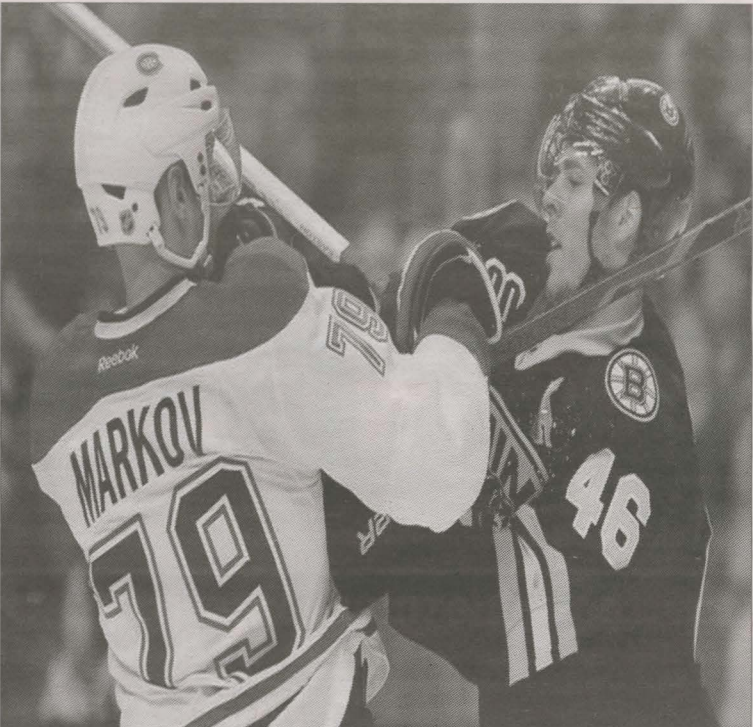
Now for the West, the Portland Trailblazers won the series in game six at home. This was definitely a great game that could have been sent into a game seven, but with 0.9 seconds left on the clock Damian Lillard hit a three to seal the series win 99-98. When asked about the shot to seal the deal, Lillard said,

"That's definitely the biggest shot of my life—so far." The Portland Trailblazers will meet the San Antonio Spurs in the semifinals as they made it look easy in game seven and won 119-96. The Mavs have sent the West champion and number one seeded Spurs into game seven. Dallas is definitely winning the 3-point battle, but as for the speed of the game, the Spurs have the edge because of Monta Ellis' speed of attacking the rim. Game seven will come down to the team with the most well-conditioned players, since both teams have players in their 30s.

The Thunder of Oklahoma City won game seven against the Denver Nuggets Saturday afternoon. Veterans Russell Westbrook and Kevin Durant led the charge for the Thunder. Westbrook made history, becoming just the second player in the NBA to have two triple-doubles in game 7, the other held by Rajon Rondo. OKC will play the Los Angeles Clippers for the semi-finals.

The LA Clippers survived a close game seven against the Golden State Warriors, winning 126-121. The key play maker in game seven for the Clippers was DeAndre Jordan with a couple crucial blocks, rebounds for put-backs, and assists to gain the edge on the Warriors. Although the Warriors lost, Stephen Curry had a huge series, putting up 161 points against the Clippers. Lob City will face off against OKC for the second round of playoffs. The second round will be just as tense as the first and everyone is looking forward to the matchups on the court.

NHL sees amazing first round Playoffs continue to supply excitement



THE CANADIENS AND BRUINS, two of the original six NHL teams, face off in a second round matchup. (Courtesy of nhl.com)

BY DANIEL CONMY
SPORTS EDITOR

As everyone focuses on the NBA playoffs, the NHL playoffs have seen some incredible games and series. If you have a two-goal lead, you are not safe as 20 two-goal leads have been blown and the most recent one has been the Boston Bruins beating the Montreal Canadiens by scoring four goals in the third period.

Let's backtrack to the first round. In the first round, we saw three series go to game 7, including a monumental collapse from the San Jose Sharks (as per usual from the Sharks). The Sharks went up 3-0 versus the Los Angeles Kings, but then things "quickly" turned as Jonathan Quick dominated the rest of the series. This was the fourth time in hockey history that a team has fallen after a 3-0 lead in the series. Moving down the I-5 freeway, the Anaheim Ducks won in six games in improbable fashion. With less than three minutes to go in the third period, Nick Bonino scored on a wrist shot to pull the Ducks within one. Then with less than 30 seconds to go, Davante Smith-Pelly tied it up and the game moved to overtime at 4-4. The Ducks wasted no time in overtime, as Nick Bonino scored on a wrist shot and the Ducks won the series in shocking fashion as the home team, Dallas Stars, fans were silent as the goal went in.

The defending champions, the Chicago Blackhawks, welcomed back their superstars, Patrick Kane and Jonathan Toews, for the opening round of the playoffs against the St. Louis Blues. The Blues were up 2-0 in the series on narrow victories and looked in prime position to continue their winning ways, but the Blackhawks showed their strength and won four straight to move in the Western Conference Semifinals. The Blackhawks will be facing the Minnesota Wild in the semifinals,

but Minnesota's road to the semis was hard fought against the young Colorado Avalanche. Nathan McKinnon, a rookie of the year candidate, at the remarkable age of 18, led the Avalanche to the decisive game seven. Unfortunately for the Avalanche, they experienced serious déjà vu as they lost game seven at home on an overtime goal by Nino Niederreiter. This defeat was eerily similar to when the Wild defeated the Avalanche in 2003 as Andrew Brunette beat now head coach of the Avalanche, Patrick Roy.

In the Eastern Conference first round, we saw the Columbus Blue Jackets get their first playoff win in their history. Unfortunately they could not keep up with the No. 1 seeded Pittsburgh Penguins and lost the series 4-2. The Rangers moved on from their first round series and will now be facing the Penguins. The Rangers had a tough time against the Philadelphia Flyers, as that series lasted seven games and the Rangers narrowly won in game seven, 2-1.

The Boston Bruins and Montreal Canadiens made quick work of their opponents in the first round and they set up an amazing battle between two of the first six NHL teams. Montreal and Boston have met 34 times in the postseason and are set for another amazing match up in the Eastern Conference semis.

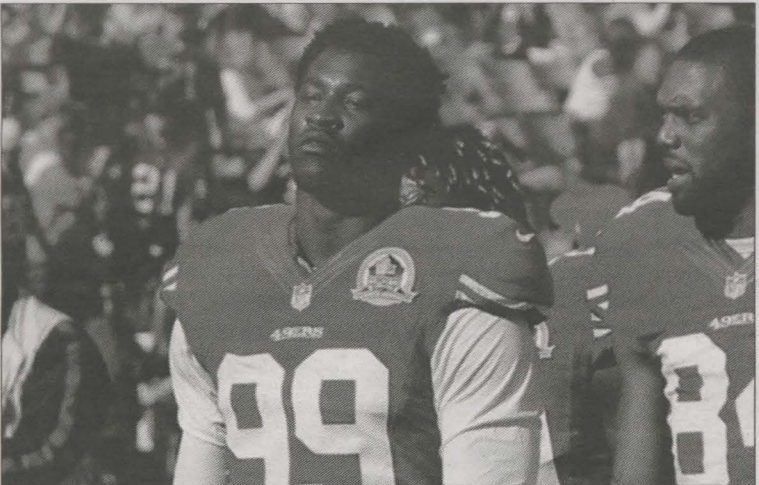
We will also see the battle between Southern California teams as the Kings and Ducks fight for supremacy.

The NHL playoffs are a different beast than the regular season and anyone can truly hoist the Stanley Cup when it is all said and done.

All I want is overtime, crazy comebacks, and the continual chippiness after the whistles. The team most likely to win the cup will be the team with the best goalie. Also, remember that no two-goal lead is safe in these playoffs.

COMMENTARY

NFL athletes continue to face problems with the law



ALDON SMITH has been arrested in the offseason for yelling "bomb" in an airport. (Courtesy of bayasreaportsguy.com)

BY KEVIN BROWN
STAFF WRITER

The recent arrest of 49ers linebacker Aldon Smith has re-heated the talk about athletes facing convictions. He is certainly not the only player facing consequences off the field, as there have been several players arrested in recent years in the NFL — and the NBA. Fellow 49er Chris Culliver was arrested in March in San Jose on felony hit and run charges after it was discovered he threatened the victim with brass knuckles. Across the bay, former Raiders linebacker Rolando McClain was arrested in

December of 2011 for brandishing a gun and firing it next to a man's head after an altercation in his Alabama hometown.

The more extreme cases include former Patriots tight end Aaron Hernandez who has been in jail since last June as he was accused of two homicides — one dating back to July 2012 in Boston. The Patriots knew of Hernandez's off-field activities before they drafted him. Even though several signs pointed to gang activity, they took a chance on him anyway. Can we blame the coaches, GMs, and owners for investing in guys with checked pasts? What about the

judges who seem to cut the athletes in trouble too much slack? Former Saints wideout Donte Stallworth spent just 30 days in jail after he hit a man crossing the street after a late night at the bars. The accident occurred between 6 and 7 a.m. and sobriety tests showed that Stallworth was drunk when he killed the man. Getting away with manslaughter can only happen to professional athletes in a situation like that; most civilians would have gotten at least one or two years in prison.

Not only do athletes get away with too many crimes, but they also commit more crimes than other people at their economic level. Most million-dollar CEOs aren't getting arrested on a yearly basis, but athletes are, and in massive numbers. Countless DUIs, weapon and drug charges, and domestic disputes may soon hurt America's most popular as the NFL already faces several lawsuits about workplace safety and failing to fairly compensate those injured on the field. All in all, NFL players are arrested much more than other athletes and it is only a matter of time until cases like that of Aaron Hernandez become commonplace in the National Football League.

SPORTS THIS WEEK

Track

West Coast Invitational @ San Francisco

Baseball

Wed. @ UC Davis 4:00 p.m.
Fri. vs. San Francisco 3:00 p.m.
Sat. vs. San Francisco 1:00 p.m.
Sun. vs. San Francisco 1:00 p.m.

Softball

Wed. @ UC Davis 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.
Fri. @ BYU 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.
Sat. @ BYU 11:00 a.m.

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SPORTS

Julien to play in NCAA singles tournament Julien and Frampton earn WCC All-Academic honors

BY EMILIO BUENROSTRO
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Thanks to successful fall and spring seasons, senior Jenny Julien will compete in her second straight NCAA Singles Championship, representing the Gaels in a field of 64 players.

The two-time West Coast Conference Player of the Year will travel to Athens, Georgia, to begin play on May 21 at the University of Georgia.

Under her belt, Julien holds a 2014 spring record of 19-2 (7-2 against ranked opponents). At the end of April, Julien was ranked 9th in the nation in the Intercollegiate Tennis Association. Her dominant playing throughout the year has allowed her to be ranked anywhere from 7th to 13th in the country during the spring season.

In her strong fall season, Julien reached the finals of the ITA Northwest Regional and had a strong USTA/ITA Indoor Intercollegiate Tournament in New York, which led her to a No. 7 preseason spring rank, which is the highest rank a Saint Mary's women's tennis player has received.



JENNY JULIEN AND JADE FRAMPTON earn honors on and off the court. (Courtesy of SMC Gaels)

Not only did Julien lead her team on the court, she also succeeded off the court as well.

Along with fellow senior teammate Jade Frampton, Jenny Julien was named to the All-West Coast Conference Academic team this past Thursday.

Julien, who majors in Business Administration, earned a GPA of 3.49. Frampton, who has earned All-WCC honorable mention in both singles and doubles play, maintained a 3.54 GPA as an English major. Additionally, Frampton is known throughout the Saint Mary's community for her written

pieces, and her writing has been featured on SMC Gaels.com

As only the second tennis player to win WCC Player of the Year, Julien will head into the tournament with great momentum. In the West Coast Conference Championships in San Diego, she was able to sweep her competition, going 3-0 with wins against USF, BYU, and her longtime rival, Lorraine Guillermo of Pepperdine.

Julien will represent Saint Mary's College on May 21 at the Dan Magill Tennis Complex. The tournament will take place until May 26.

Saint Mary's crushes Lindenwood in semifinals Gaels to face Life University in finals

BY DANIEL CONMY
SPORTS EDITOR

Saint Mary's Rugby continued its undefeated season in the semifinals at Pat Vincent Field, here in Moraga, California. The Gaels dominated Lindenwood University, 72-7 on Saturday afternoon. With the victory, it sets up a rematch against Life University. The game will take place at Stanford University, as these teams are the only two undefeated teams at the Division I-A level. "We definitely wanted Life," said senior Mark Bowers. "We felt as if we could have won last year but we just came up a little short. This year, playing back on the West Coast and hopefully not in a rain storm like last year, we really like our chances."

For the semifinal game, the game was close for 25 minutes. Bubba Jones scored his second try, which led the Gaels to a 10-7 lead. Lindenwood kept the pressure on Saint Mary's, but the Gaels defense stood tall and stopped the Lions multiple times. Kevin O'Connor added a

try after a great play from Dino Waldren that helped the Gaels get back on offense. At halftime the score stood at 20-7. The Gaels opened up the game in the second half and finished the game with a 72-7 score. Bubba Jones scored his fourth try of the day. Other scorers on the afternoon included Ryan Pratt, Nick Schlobohm, Michael McCarthy, Mark Bowers, Kingsley McGowan, and Chase Herring.

Saturday afternoon was the matchup of all matchups in the world of Rugby. Life was able to beat Arkansas State 34-27 in the other semifinal. Life University was able to beat the Gaels in a rainy matchup last year at University of North Carolina. Saint Mary's has 543 points for and has only given up 27 points all season in their conference. Life University has given up 77 points and scored 154. In last year's matchup, it was a very defensive game; we will see if the Gaels can break loose with their high-powered offense and steamroll the defending champs and get revenge for one of the toughest losses for the team.

MLB news and notes of April

Rockies hot offense, Abreu breaks records, Pujols into 500 homerun club

BY DANIEL CONMY
SPORTS EDITOR

We are into our second month of baseball and we have had some great stories. We have seen rookies out perform just about everyone and set records. We have seen struggling veterans and teams outperforming what people thought possible.

First, let's start with the NL West and the Colorado Rockies. Charlie Blackmon started his year on an incredible hot streak hitting over .400. Although Blackmon has cooled down, he had a remarkable 6-hit game in the month of April. Continuing with the Rockies, Nolan Arenado has a hit streak of 24 games, after the completion of Sunday's game against the New York Mets. Along with Arenado's amazing hitting streak, we have seen web gem after web gem from the reigning Gold Glove winner at third base. Along with Arenado and Blackmon's stellar starts Troy Tulowitzki has been the modern-day Babe Ruth up until this point. Tulowitzki is hitting .400 after taking the day off on Sunday afternoon. Basically, the Rockies are off to a hot start and will be an exciting offensive team to follow throughout the season.

Jose Abreu was signed for 6-years and \$68 million. The White Sox are looking at that deal and calling it a bargain if Abreu can keep up his amazing pace. Abreu set a rookie record with home runs (10) and RBI's (31) for the month of April. Realistically,

Abreu will not be able to keep up that absolutely ridiculous pace, but he has already belted two more home runs in the month of May.

Albert Pujols looks to be back into form. The machine has well surpassed 500 home runs and is now a part of a historic group. Pujols, after Sunday's play, has 10 home runs to his name for the season. We might not see 100 RBI's from Albert Pujols again, but this is a good sign for the Angels after signing that monstrous contract that many thought was too much money.

At the end of play on Sunday, the divisional leaders are the Atlanta Braves, Milwaukee Brewers, and San Francisco Giants for the National League. The Milwaukee Brewers have been the surprise team of the season so far, as the bats of Carlos Gomez and Ryan Braun have carried them. Along with those bats, Francisco Rodriguez has been lights out at the back of the bullpen and their starting pitching has been superb. No one knows if the Brewers can keep it up but the NL Central will be a dogfight.

The divisional leaders for the American League are the New York Yankees, Detroit Tigers, and Oakland Athletics. The AL East is extremely close and no one would be surprised if someone else surpasses the Yankees in that division. The Tigers have played well through the first month of the season. The Tigers are the early winners of the Ian Kinsler-Prince Fielder trade, as Fielder has struggled in the first month. The Oakland A's continue to impress even though A.J. Griffin and Jarrod Parker have been lost for the season. Jim Johnson has struggled in the back end of the bullpen, but Jesse Chavez and Scott Kazmir have stepped up big for the A's in the rotation. Billy Beane continues to work his magic.



BUBBA JONES scored a try four times on the afternoon against the fourth-seed, Lindenwood. (Courtesy of SMC Gaels)

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